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ABSTRACT

St. Cloud State University's Teacher of Color project provides alternate licensure for degreed individuals needing only to complete their teacher education core and subject area coursework. It offers minority students on- and off-campus programs, financial support, flexible hours, and a compressed program. Researchers examined participating students' lived experiences through case studies, investigating whether previous life experiences impacted their decisions to pursue teaching and to complete the program. The study also examined program policies and practices necessary for success and barriers to attaining licensure. Three minority students who were in on- and off-campus programs and had recently graduated became the case studies. They responded to open-ended interviews at several points in time, providing facts and opinions on programming and practices. In addition, 47 currently enrolled, off-campus students completed surveys. Most students were involved in the program because of the financial support and the compressed program structure. The compressed program was also a barrier because of its high demands. Lack of financial support was another barrier. Students' experiences suggested that both financial and social/emotional support were essential to success. The on-campus case study students spoke of the lack of peer support on campus as being a problem. The students' personal life experiences, both positive and negative, influenced their decisions to seek teaching licenses. (Contains 27 references.) (SM)

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"Special Delivery:" Case studies in alternative teacher licensure programs for students of color

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Abstract

Our society provides an environment which is hostile to people of color who do not have the knowledge and skills needed to manage and navigate their surroundings. Reversal of this state of affairs depends to a large extent on appropriate and meaningful education for children of color, delivered by teachers of color. This is the vision of the Teachers of Color program at this midwest institution. The project relies on cooperative efforts by several institutions of higher education, school districts, and the Board of Teaching to remove barriers and create new pathways to licensure for a large number of qualified people of color. An argument against alternate licensure programs is that there is a paucity of research to lend credibility to their worth. In the meantime, rather than continue with status quo methods and measures which have failed to provide adequate access to teacher of color candidates and assurance of their successful program completion, this institution has designed and continued to refine its alternate licensure programs. To lend credence to the energy, creativity, and hope behind this Teacher of Color program, we have utilized case studies, which although not generalizable, give a rich description of what is. Three graduates of differing routes to licensure lend their personal stories to the political and philosophical debates about alternative licensure.

"Special Delivery:" Case studies in alternative teacher licensure programs for students of color

Our society provides an environment which is hostile to the people of color who do not have the knowledge and the skills needed to manage and navigate their environment. The ensuing problems are complex and are both caused by and result in a long process of family and neighborhood deterioration, a degrading educational curriculum, and community role models who make crime and violence seem necessary for survival. While external forces continue to play a role, meaningful change must occur from within (Zeichner, 1993).

Haberman (1995) suggests that teachers of color are able to develop a new generation of people of color who, to their full potential, will begin to evolve themselves, their families, and their communities out of the spiraling death-fall in which they now find themselves. Therefore, it becomes necessary for us to examine the agents of socialization for children of color and to determine how best to correct early on the negative perceptions and self-concepts held by children of color. Young people of color face numerous barriers to successful adulthood in our society. The absence of people of color in the socialization process of all children creates an unreal perception of the world in which the children will live as adults. They must be taught to believe that they can control their own destinies. To bring this about requires a special kind of education and a special kind of teacher. The formal educational system is a major component of the socialization process. Teachers of color make a difference in the educational performance and community values of students of color (Middleton, Mason, Stilwell, & Parker, 1988).

Three stark facts emerge from demographic and other data to lend urgency to the need to prepare teachers of color: (1) the number of children of color is growing, but they are failing to thrive in school. According to Kunjufu (1990), the rate of suspensions and drop-outs among children of color is alarming and has been growing worse during the last

decade. In some urban areas, the dropout rate approaches 50% for Black males. Factors which contribute to such large numbers of dropouts include student boredom, lack of finances, lack of rewarding experiences in school, lack of positive adult reinforcement, and concern for gangs and safety; (2) the number of teachers of color does not reflect the ethnic and racial make up of our increasingly diverse student populations (Smith, 1984). For example, in the state of Minnesota, children of color constitute 12% of the school age population, a level projected to double by 2020. However, a different picture exists in Minneapolis where African-American students make up 42.2% of the public school population, and in St. Paul where schools include 39.46% white Americans, 28.04% Asian-Americans and 22.81% African-Americans; and (3) new teachers of color are not being trained in adequate numbers by most of the nation's colleges and universities (Graham, 1987). Barely 2% (853) of Minnesota's 45,000 K-12 and special education teachers, are people of color. On the national level 86.8 (number in the 1000s) teachers are white, 8.0 are Black, and 5.2 are other ethnicities (National Education Association, 1991).

In light of such demographic trends, various licensing institutions and states have designed alternate licensure programs. Despite the current controversy about differing assumptions associated with alternate routes to certification (Haberman, 1986), the program created by St. Cloud State University has attempted to narrow the gap between assumptions and realities. Rather than determine that any model of teacher preparation precludes a need for field experiences or content or pedagogy, the alternate route at SCSU proceeds on the assumption that all aspects of teacher preparation are necesssary but should be individualized, streamlined, community-based, and funded. The argument that teachers in alternate licensure programs will emerge with different kinds of expertise, is related not exclusively to their preparation, but as well to their prior experiences, both professional and personal. For example, a basic premise of teacher preparation programs today is that teachers will be able to relate to students of color. Such preparation will naturally be different for white candidates than for candidates of color.

St. Cloud State University Alternate Licensure Program

The vision of the Teachers of Color project at this institution is to change the community and school environments surrounding children of color by making possible an infusion of new and properly trained teachers of color. These professionals can in turn provide children with strong role models and can instill hope and self-confidence into the emotional developmental process as a method to change the children's futures. This project, created by the College of Education at St. Cloud State University, is a comprehensive and systematic approach to developing teachers of color. The project relies on cooperative efforts by several institutions of higher education, school districts and the Board of Teaching to remove barriers and create new pathways to licensure for a large number of qualified people of color.

The objectives of the Teachers of Color Project are to: (1) identify and recruit teacher of color candidates, (2) offer program options leading to professional licensure, (3) provide critical financial assistance, and (4) implement a multi-faceted support system to ensure success in the program.

The St. Cloud State University alternate licensure was created by networking with Metropolitan State University and local school districts. The network was necessary because historically many people of color at major universities and colleges have had negative experiences which result in their unwillingness to invest their self-worth in the possibility of additional failures. The program was not created as a rejection of the high quality campus-based, traditional teacher preparation at St. Cloud State. It was also not driven by a lack of teachers or a need by school districts to assume control. Rather it was in response to the critical need for teachers of color in Minnesota, and indeed, throughout the country.

St. Cloud State University is located in central Minnesota, about 65 miles west of the Twin Cities, which makes it less accessible for students of color. Metropolitan State University is located in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area and has a reputation for cultural

sensitivity and equity. That reputation aides the process of recruiting and provides a base of operation in the inner city. Students are able to complete any necesssary general education credits and upper division electives through Metro State, which lacks a teacher preparation program, and then transfer those credits to St. Cloud State for the final phase of their licensure program.

The Minnesota Board of Teaching granted permission for this alternate licensure format, placing the quality control in the hands of faculty in the Department of Teacher Development at St. Cloud State. A Certification Team for the secondary education licensure is composed of faculty from the various disciplines. These individuals serve as instructors and as an advisory panel who recommend licensure. The St. Cloud State Teacher of Color program has attempted to meet the AACTE proposed alternate licensure criteria which include: (1) selective admission standards, (2) appropriate curriculum, (3) a supervised internship, and (4) a final examination to assume competence (AACTE, 1986). Candidates provide initial application portfolios which are evaluated by a faculty team. The curriculum follows that of campus-based programs with some streamlining and more application and field-based work. Internships are supervised by mentor teachers as well as SCSU faculty. All students must successfully pass the Pre Professional Skills test before being granted a license in the state of Minnesota.

School districts participating agree to hire the licensure candidates as instructional aides. In this way, administrators who profess a desire to promote diversity among their staff can demonstrate their commitment through budget adjustments that allow these candidates to be employed fulltime in the school while developing their teaching skills. For those who are qualified, a provisional license can be obtained, allowing substitute teaching simultaneously with work on permanent licensure.

Students in the alternate licensure program are most often fully employed and responsible for families. Therefore, funding has been provided for courses and textbooks. Most funds have been short-term and specific to portions of programs. There is also a

work component built into the school district-sponsored program which provides students with another income supplement, as well as with advantages inherent in working in a school setting.

The initial Teacher of Color Project was designed to provide an alternate path for licensure for degreed individuals needing only to complete their professional education core and subject area coursework. This delivery system accommodates the needs of nontraditional students, offering coursework at locations easily accessible to the students. Participants journey through the program in cohorts which enables them to experience support and camaraderie. However, the project later expanded to include students with varying numbers of college credits and therefore developed additional routes to meet the more diverse needs and student profiles. In addition to the off-campus compressed licensure model, there is an on-campus Teacher of Color program which is not an alternate route, but which provides students with funding as well as employment in the St. Cloud school district following graduation.

Objectives of the Study

An argument against alternate licensure programs is that there is a paucity of research to lend credibility to their worth. In the meantime, rather than continue with status quo methods which have failed to provide adequate access to teacher of color candidates and assurance of their successful program completion, St. Cloud State University has designed and continued to refine its alternate licensure programs. To lend credence to the energy, creativity, and hope behind this Teacher of Color program, we have examined students' lived experiences through case studies, which although they may not be generalizable, are personally valid stamps of approval (vanManen, 1990).

Data collection led to the development of the following research questions:

1) Do previous life experiences impact an individual's decision to pursue a teaching license as well as the successful completion of a licensure program?

2) What are specific programmatic policies and practices necessary for successful procurement of a teaching license?

3) What barriers stand in the way of attaining licensure?

4) What are students' post-graduation reflections which might inform future practices?

Methodology

Three students who are recent Teacher of Color licensure graduates, who participated in either on- or off-campus programs, and who attained different licenses were randomly selected as case studies. The students responded to open-ended interviews several times, providing both facts and opinions on practices and programming (Yin, 1994). The qualitative method of case studies was chosen as a means of providing greater understanding about the impact of the Teacher of Color program as well as insights into what aspects are perceived as failures and which are deemed successful (Merriam, 1988). These three graduates of differing routes to licensure lend their stories, and thus the meaning of their experiences, to the political and philosophical debates about alternative licensure (Knowles, 1992).

In addition to the case studies, surveys were collected from 47 students, all of whom are presently enrolled in the off-campus licensure program. It was important to collect information from off-campus route students because two of the three case studies involved on-campus route students. Although a total of 47 students responded to the surveys, not all survey items were addressed by all students. However, all individuals responded to questions about their previous educational experiences as well as why they wanted to become teachers.

Data Collection and Analysis

As data was collected and reviewed, the areas emphasized led to the research questions. Data from initial interviews was transcribed before students were asked for followup interviews. Survey information selected was based on the research questions

which had arisen from the case studies. The analysis will follow the outline of the research questions.

1) Do previous life experiences impact an individual's decision to pursue a teaching license as well as the successful completion of a licensure program?

Research into alternative versus traditional teacher preparation has focused on curricula and teacher candidates (Adelman, N.E., 1986; Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Feistritzer, E. D., 1990; Stoddart, T., & Floden, R. E., 1989). Alternate licensure requires a student to have substantial life experience. Therefore, a comparison of traditional teacher preparation programming with what is necesssary to meet the needs of these students is inappropriate. The candidates in this program are nontraditional, and most will have had substantial experience working within an education-related field. This particular profile is a common one in alternate licensure programs (Darling-Hammon, Hudson, & Kirby, 1989; Stoddart, 1992). Research has provided evidence of the impact of life experiences on teacher candidates' application of their education to their future teaching (Bullough, 1989; Crow, 1987; Gomez & Stoddart, 1991; Hollingsworth, 1989; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991).

Student Profiles

The three St. Cloud State University Teacher of Color students who are presently teaching or working on advanced degrees provide examples of the power of personal stories:

Student #1: Born in Houston, Texas, J. was one of thirteen children raised by a single mother, and the only sibling to complete high school and college. His first language was Spanish which he learned from his mother who had a sixth grade education. However, it is to his mother that J. gives the credit for his persistence and success because she perceived him as exceptional from the time he was very young. J. credited two high school teachers, one Mexican and the other African-American, with providing him the encouragement he needed to continue his education.

Student #2: M. was the eighth of 14 children born in Minneapolis but raised in rural Minnesota where her family was the only Black family in the area. Her memories of early years in school are painful and void of any mentors or peers who resembled her. To hide her insecurity, she learned to strike out and was often in the principals' offices. After a few years she learned not to speak in class or raise her hand to answer a question. "To survive, I developed a white sense of me. I didn't know what it was like to be Black. How was I supposed to act?" Her desire to become a teacher arose early as she witnessed her mother as a day care provider and realized that she had never had an African-American teacher and that her self-esteem had diminished as a result of neglect in the classroom.

Student #3: Born in Greenville, Mississippi to a mother whose first child was born to her when she was in 8th grade, L. grew up with five siblings in the projects on Chicago's southside. His father was murdered when L. was a baby, and he is the only member of his family to complete an education. His desire to teach was not a childhood dream but rather one which grew out of his more recent observations of young school-age children of color playing in the streets during school hours. Those observations resulted in L.'s inquiries at school district offices about what was being done for those children. His interest translated into a job as an educational assistant, which whet his appetite for teaching and a license.

Recruitment

Through the use of strategies to tap into an existing pool of talented people of color who range from 30 to 55 years of age and possess the potential and the desire to become licensed teachers, Minnesota school districts can literally create their own pool of teachers of color. A large percentage of these people currently work in metropolitan area schools as teacher assistants, youth advocates, and volunteers. They work in standard and alternative educational settings throughout school districts. Many of them already possess BA, MA and Ph.D. degrees, but have not acquired teaching licenses. Others have varying amounts of formal education ranging from 20 to 200 quarter credits, but do not have a degree. All

of these people have in common very substantial personal and work experiences that enhance their capacity to absorb and understand new information.

The identification and recruitment of teacher of color candidates for the St. Cloud State Alternate Licensure Program is accomplished through the presentation of information to leaders in communities of color, nontraditional career workers desiring change, community college students, para-professional and non-licensed school personnel.

Student #1: Although J. was recruited to the SCSU campus without concern for a major, he became interested in teaching because of some members of the university faculty who served as informal mentors to him. By the end of his sophomore year, J. had been invited by faculty to join the Teacher of Color program on campus. He thought he would enjoy teaching young children but after completing a practicum in a kindergarten classroom, J. decided to major in social studies at the secondary level.

Student #2: M. attended SCSU because it was close to her home. She was the last child in her family to graduate from a rural, all-white high school. Her younger siblings chose to move back to the Twin Cities area where they could participate in a more balanced, less stressful educational experience. She had decided to major in sociology, and during her sophomore year took a course in Child and Family Studies. At that time she realized that she wanted to teach young children and so completed coursework for a prekindergarten license. The added incentive of financial assistance and guaranteed employment made the decision more reasonable for M. However, after not being granted fulltime employment as promised, M. returned as a participant in the Teacher of Color Program to acquire her Elementary Teaching license.

Student #3: L. had initially attended a 99% white, fundamentalist Christian college where he earned 86 credits and from which he dropped out two quarters short of graduation. During his period of employment as an assistant in Minneapolis schools, he learned of the Teacher of Color Alternate Licensure program and applied for admission.

He was rejected because of too few credits and too little experience. He argued his case and was accepted on probation.

Survey data

Demographic information from the surveys revealed that of the 47 students, 33 are female and 14, male. Ethnicities represented among the students include 30 African-Americans, 11 Africans, 3 Latinos, 2 Asians, and 1 Native-American. Twenty-five students are married, and 20 of them are parents. Fifteen students are single, and 8 of those are parents. Although not all students revealed their ages, they are all nontraditional students. This information fits with the profile of the case study of Student #3 who is also a nontraditional student whose needs could best be met in the alternate route program.

The extent of prior education of alternate route students varies, with 26 students continuing work on undergraduate degrees, 11 having already completed bachelors' degrees, 7 with masters' degrees, and 3 with doctorates. Despite the fact that all of the students are working toward teaching licensure, 44 of the 47 have had experience and have been employed in the schools in some capacity, as substitute teachers, assistant teachers, program coordinators, parent educators, or preschool teachers. This parallels the experience of Student #3 whose work with children at risk motivated him to seek licensure. In addition to employment in the schools, survey respondents have worked in such capacities as an airplane mechanic, chief environmental mircobiologist, graphic artist, urban planner, flight attendant, beautician, and a military job trainer among other things.

The rationale expressed for wanting to pursue a teaching license varied. However, most students' motivation grew out of their own experiences as students or as parents. Thirty-four students wrote about their concern for young students of color and their desire to provide those children with equal educational experiences, encouragement, and guidance. Twenty-seven of the surveys revealed alternate route students' desires to be role models as teachers of color. Eleven responses dealt with the need to address diversity in the classroom as an important factor in their decision to become teachers.

While the amount of coursework beyond a high school diploma differs greatly among teacher candidates, the life experiences, both negative (i.e., no peers or teachers of color; parents with little education) and positive (i.e., parents' encouragement and expectations for their children) provided motivation for their pursuit of licensure. Since many graduates of color are attracted to more lucrative careers (Darling-Hammond, 1984; Post & Woessner, 1987; Smith & Welch, 1986), and since a number of these students are deciding in mid-life to change careers, it seems logical to attribute those choices to past impressionable experiences.

Program Policies and Practices

2) What are specific programmatic policies and practices necessary for successful procurement of a teaching license?

The Alternate Route model uses the standard teacher licensure program process in a slightly modified and compressed version which responds to the maturity, experience and past academic success of the students. The program is designed to run from summer to summer, about 15 months, while leaving room for people who have not mastered all the competencies to continue in the process until they reach the standard of excellence required for licensure recommendation. All students are required to meet the 192 quarter credit graduation requirements for SCSU. Each student will register for the standard class, but it will be delivered in a compressed mode. Classes often meet for two nights per week and one Saturday each month.

Regardless of specific schedules, coursework has the equivalent of 52 sessions of 4 hours each of content totaling 208 contact hours during the year. In addition, 40 hours of class time at the end of the school year in the form of a debriefing and final professional seminar. This brings the total contact hours to 288 which is roughly 54 percent of the 550 hours in the regular program. The inclusion of a full time internship for the entire school year with a mentor teacher and the enhanced format of the practice teaching experience is perceived to adequately compensate for the compression of faculty contact.

Student #1 (On-campus program): "At first I wanted to major in physical therapy, then engineering. Then I was inspired by teachers I watched who were good with kids and thought that some day I might like to teach Mexican-American kids in the inner city. I wanted to be a role model. At the end of my sophomore year, Les Green invited me to join the Teacher of Color program. At first I wanted to be an elementary teacher but after my experience in a kindergarten classroom, I changed my mind and went into secondary Social Studies. The most I got from the program was support; staff was always good to me and gave me all the tools I need. I graduated in the spring of 1997 and am presently teaching Social Studies at a local high school."

Student #2 (On-campus program): M. graduated in 1995 with a BA in Sociology and a license in Early Education as part of the Teacher of Color program. She felt supported and aided in her success by three faculty involved in the program. During her student teaching experience which occurred in rural Minnesota, she was occasionally met with wonder or fear by children who asked questions such as, 'Why is your skin dirty?' Because M. participated in the on-campus program, she was not part of a cohort and received support only from her family. Having entered the university without a sense of self as African-American, she chose not to join organizations composed of or for students of color. Working 40 hours a week throughout her college years also made it difficult for her to socialize within the university community. It was not until she was midway through her higher education that she began a process of "self-discovery" during which time she began to reflect on where she had been and who she really was and wanted to be. "Because of the agreement with the local district, I was given a position right away in a summer program. The administrators were impressed and wanted to hire me fulltime which ended up involving 7 different jobs. The next year I was cut to one third time which I could not afford and so am back in school. Although the District administration professed a desire for diverse staff, issues of seniority were used as rationalizations for my situation." When the school district was unwilling to provide her with fulltime employment in the field of

Early Education, she returned to SCSU where she will complete her Elementary license in 1999.

Student #3: L. undertook coursework at two community colleges and Metropolitan State before completing his license in Secondary Education through St. Cloud State. It took him a year and a half to complete the license. "It overwhelms me when I think back that I was almost not given the opportunity and now here I am. I harvested everything that they put in me and this product came out. From the first cohort, I was one of the first to graduate and I had the most to do. When I graduated, I didn't take a teaching job right away, but talked to a professor in Special Education about my interest in students with behavior problems. During my student teaching experiences in SPED everywhere I went I was offered a position on the spot, but I wanted to finish my degree first. In February of 1998 I will graduate with a MS in Special Education."

Survey Data

The majority of the survey responses to students' involvement in the alternate licensure program spoke to issues of financial support and the program structure which allowed them to move through the program more rapidly. When asked why they thought they might be successful in attaining their teaching licenses, 25 students attributed their optimism to their past experiences and diverse backgrounds. Many students referred to their affective traits such as compassion, patience, strength, determination, hope, faith, and flexibility.

While two of the three case studies provide evidence of the possibility of students of color attaining a teaching license through a traditional on-campus route, it appears obvious from the personal stories of pain, that the lack of support from peers of color was detrimental to students on campus. Most of the faculty in both programs were Euro-American, which seemed at this point not to be an issue for the students. The students in the alternate route were nontraditional (i.e., older, married with children, employed fulltime) and therefore in need of evening classes and a compressed program.

Barriers

3) What barriers stand in the way of attaining licensure?

Student #1: Being one of few Mexican-American students on campus, J. found that after his first two weeks there, he was ready to return home. "I wanted to quit almost every month mostly because of the ignorance around me. I would think to myself, 'Why am I not home with my family?' Then I would remind myself that if I made it through, there would be a better chance for others like myself."

Student #2: "I experienced many barriers throughout the application process and feel it was because I am a minority. Finances always have been somewhat of a barrier for me." Having to work 40 hours a week made it difficult to maintain the grade point average M. would have preferred. The lack of self-identity combined with hours off campus left her without companionship. "I didn't know where to go for support."

Student #3: "I was always persistent. When the red tape came, I just cut through it and went ahead and did what needed doing. I remember Les saying, 'If this is your dream, don't let anything come between you and it.' Today that's what I preach to the kids. Members of my cohort still call me today for advice and support."

Survey data

Interestingly few students perceived many barriers. The compressed nature of the program, which is viewed positively, is also expressed as a barrier in terms of its demand for sustained effort for a year or two. An additional concern is any interruption of the program due to insufficient funding. Another barrier is the commitment to hiring of teachers of color by administrators who may be giving it lip service alone.

Reflections on decision to become a teacher:

4) What are students' post-graduation reflections which might inform future practices?

Student #1: "I love my job and think I am making a difference in the school. I knew that the only person who was going to stop me from achieving this goal was myself. The money and program were out there; I just had to grab it. Now I need to get my siblings

back in school and away from the attractions of the world. I think the program should continue just as it exists, although the campus needs more to support the participants. I was lonely at times, but Les was always there for me."

Student #2: "I didn't have one teacher of color throughout my educational career. I couldn't give answers to questions and had no self-esteem. There were just no role models. I want to be able to make a difference. When I student taught, I watched children of color smile and brighten up when they saw me. I feel that being one of few Teachers of Color in the area, there is a huge responsibility on my shoulders. People look at me and expect a lot of me." M. often reflected on the loss she felt about being the sole person of color in her surroundings and the need for a mentor on campus and in area schools in which she performed her internships. She found out after having been hired upon graduation that a teacher had been cut so that she could be provided a position. That situation created a negative work environment for her. "The school district needs to hold to its agreement for providing employment."

Student #3: "I think the feeling of accomplishment I have is almost as good as seeing your kid born! There were sacrifices and there was less money while enroute, but it was an investment in my future. There were times I was tempted to give up, but I created a path and pursued it. There needs to be consistent communication between the university and the students. A newsletter would be helpful. In fact, because the Teacher of Color program gave me this opportunity, I would like to give back and would assist with the newsletter. I think graduates should be used as mentors to students still working on their licenses."

Discussion

The utilization of case studies provides a personal view of the journey through alternate licensure programs by three individuals whose experiences have parallels by virtue of their life journeys. It is beyond debate in this country that issues of race continue to impact lives and opportunities. The desire to teach among the participants in the Teacher of Color Program is obvious. Students' personal educational and life experiences, both

positive and/or negative, appear to be the determining factor in their seeking teaching licenses. Self-reports of affective traits such as compassion, determination and hope may signal areas that could lead to further research concerning the numerous experiences of the teacher candidates in various positions in the school system.

The two case studies of traditional on-campus route candidates demonstrate the fact that teachers of color can successfully complete such a program. The compressed coursework, the internships, the convenience of class sites, the collaboration among insitutions of higher education were all necessary factors in the success of the programs as demonstrated by case studies and surveys. In addition, financial support was essential. Neither program is presently supported with firm commitments either from outside of or within the university, but support has been provided annually from a number of different sources.

Although there was little mention of barriers, it is obvious that without longterm financial backing, such a program as it presently exists, is more difficult to maintain. It also is difficult to convince students of color, whose experience is otherwise, that support will be forthcoming from one semester to the next.

Conclusions and Implications for future practice

As long as the high calibre student, as demonstrated in this description, is attracted to the Teacher of Color Alternate Licensure program, it would seem that the label, "alternate" would be inappropriate. The knowledge base in the College of Education at St. Cloud State University proposes that all graduates are "Transformative Professionals" who are capable of expanding their own and others' perspectives. If one listens closely to the personal stories of these teacher candidates and graduates, one perceives that they are transformative individuals in every sense of the word.

Our research suggests three implications for enhancing preservice teacher education programs for persons of color:

1. Support: When the issue of support is raised, it becomes evident from the experiences related in this study that support is essential in two forms: social/emotional and financial. Both on-campus students spoke of their lack of peer support, as well as their appreciation of the financial assistance. Both students were fortunate enough to have strong family support, to possess internalized values about the importance of education and, to maintain a strong commitment to teaching. The alternate route student appreciated the support of the cohort so much so that he was willing to continue those relationships following his graduation.

There are many avenues of financial assistance available for all college students today. However, the needs of nontraditional students of color are in many ways unique. Not only are they often supporting families and working fulltime, but they are unable to easily access information about and traditional programming for teacher preparation. The customary red tape for these students, many of whom have had previously negative experiences negotiating the "system", needs to be cut through by appropriate meeting times, central locations, and helpful personnel to assist in decision-making, transfer articulation, and registration.

Financial support of alternate programming is essential and should be firmly established at the outset so that students do not experience "down time" in the course of their programming because of a temporary shortage of finances by program sponsors. Predetermined and solid funding of alternate licensure also provides students with the perspective of a firm commitment to this effort by the sponsoring institutions.

2. Development of role models: Student #1 talked of being "inspired by teachers". Student #2 said that she had "never had an African-American teacher and her self esteem had diminished." Student #3 talked of teaching as "not a childhood dream", but one that grew from his job as an educational assistant.

From these observations it is apparent that teachers of color have the potential to succeed, but teacher preparation programs must provide alternate routes to gain more role

models so that pre-service student teachers of color may confront their own lack of self-esteem in the classroom. Through these experiences, students of color will be able to test their assumptions about the teaching profession. At the same time, it is not unfair to maintain high expectations of the students despite their past experiences or lack of role models. Completing a compressed plan of study in 15 months is a difficult undertaking. Students should be forewarned of the demands of the program, while simultaneously being affirmed of their ability to complete it, and the exciting prospects of their impact in classrooms.

3. Planning strategies for recruitment: Although St. Cloud State University maintains an active recruitment of students of color through sponsoring summer camps, on-campus days, and presentations to communities of color, none of the three case studies was recruited through those traditional channels. The on-campus students did not even begin their college educations with a teaching license in mind. Student #3 was driven by his experiences to seek out a licensure program. However, the active recruitment measures did attract the largest number of participants. As the program gains legitimacy with the passage of time, recruitment will occur more by word of mouth in communities of color.

The enthusiasm of all three case study teachers, and others like them should be utilized in the recruitment process and additionally throughout the entire course of study in the role of mentors or cohort leaders. There is no better witness to the suitability of a program such as this than a successful graduate. Retention rates could be raised by continuous mentoring when schedules and lives become barriers to students' completion of the program.

As long as there continue to exist in this country, unequal opportunities of access and education, such programs as described in this study are not only appropriate, but essential. At some point in the future perhaps preservice teachers of color will flock to the doors of teacher preparation institutions because they have positive role models and

educational experiences, rather than negative. Perhaps some day education professionals will be so highly valued that people of color will choose to teach over a more "lucrative" profession. In the meantime, the commitment to licensing teachers of color should remain at the forefront of every teacher preparation program. Along with a philosophical declaration however, should follow a promise of financial support as a demonstration of the priority of the commitment to provide this country's students with teachers of color.

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"Special Delivery:" Case studies in alternative teacher licensure programs for students of color

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Abstract

Our society provides an environment which is hostile to people of color who do not have the knowledge and skills needed to manage and navigate their surroundings. Reversal of this state of affairs depends to a large extent on appropriate and meaningful education for children of color, delivered by teachers of color. This is the vision of the Teachers of Color program at this midwest institution. The project relies on cooperative efforts by several institutions of higher education, school districts, and the Board of Teaching to remove barriers and create new pathways to licensure for a large number of qualified people of color. An argument against alternate licensure programs is that there is a paucity of research to lend credibility to their worth. In the meantime, rather than continue with status quo methods and measures which have failed to provide adequate access to teacher of color candidates and assurance of their successful program completion, this institution has designed and continued to refine its alternate licensure programs. To lend credence to the energy, creativity, and hope behind this Teacher of Color program, we have utilized case studies, which although not generalizable, give a rich description of what is. Three graduates of differing routes to licensure lend their personal stories to the political and philosophical debates about alternative licensure.

"Special Delivery:" Case studies in alternative teacher licensure programs for students of color

Our society provides an environment which is hostile to the people of color who do not have the knowledge and the skills needed to manage and navigate their environment. The ensuing problems are complex and are both caused by and result in a long process of family and neighborhood deterioration, a degrading educational curriculum, and community role models who make crime and violence seem necessary for survival. While external forces continue to play a role, meaningful change must occur from within (Zeichner, 1993).

Haberman (1995) suggests that teachers of color are able to develop a new generation of people of color who, to their full potential, will begin to evolve themselves, their families, and their communities out of the spiraling death-fall in which they now find themselves. Therefore, it becomes necessary for us to examine the agents of socialization for children of color and to determine how best to correct early on the negative perceptions and self-concepts held by children of color. Young people of color face numerous barriers to successful adulthood in our society. The absence of people of color in the socialization process of all children creates an unreal perception of the world in which the children will live as adults. They must be taught to believe that they can control their own destinies. To bring this about requires a special kind of education and a special kind of teacher. The formal educational system is a major component of the socialization process. Teachers of color make a difference in the educational performance and community values of students of color (Middleton, Mason, Stilwell, & Parker, 1988).

Three stark facts emerge from demographic and other data to lend urgency to the need to prepare teachers of color: (1) the number of children of color is growing, but they are failing to thrive in school. According to Kunjufu (1990), the rate of suspensions and drop-outs among children of color is alarming and has been growing worse during the last

decade. In some urban areas, the dropout rate approaches 50% for Black males. Factors which contribute to such large numbers of dropouts include student boredom, lack of finances, lack of rewarding experiences in school, lack of positive adult reinforcement, and concern for gangs and safety; (2) the number of teachers of color does not reflect the ethnic and racial make up of our increasingly diverse student populations (Smith, 1984). For example, in the state of Minnesota, children of color constitute 12% of the school age population, a level projected to double by 2020. However, a different picture exists in Minneapolis where African-American students make up 42.2% of the public school population, and in St. Paul where schools include 39.46% white Americans, 28.04% Asian-Americans and 22.81% African-Americans; and (3) new teachers of color are not being trained in adequate numbers by most of the nation's colleges and universities (Graham, 1987). Barely 2% (853) of Minnesota's 45,000 K-12 and special education teachers, are people of color. On the national level 86.8 (number in the 1000s) teachers are white, 8.0 are Black, and 5.2 are other ethnicities (National Education Association, 1991).

In light of such demographic trends, various licensing institutions and states have designed alternate licensure programs. Despite the current controversy about differing assumptions associated with alternate routes to certification (Haberman, 1986), the program created by St. Cloud State University has attempted to narrow the gap between assumptions and realities. Rather than determine that any model of teacher preparation precludes a need for field experiences or content or pedagogy, the alternate route at SCSU proceeds on the assumption that all aspects of teacher preparation are necesssary but should be individualized, streamlined, community-based, and funded. The argument that teachers in alternate licensure programs will emerge with different kinds of expertise, is related not exclusively to their preparation, but as well to their prior experiences, both professional and personal. For example, a basic premise of teacher preparation programs today is that teachers will be able to relate to students of color. Such preparation will naturally be different for white candidates than for candidates of color.

St. Cloud State University Alternate Licensure Program

The vision of the Teachers of Color project at this institution is to change the community and school environments surrounding children of color by making possible an infusion of new and properly trained teachers of color. These professionals can in turn provide children with strong role models and can instill hope and self-confidence into the emotional developmental process as a method to change the children's futures. This project, created by the College of Education at St. Cloud State University, is a comprehensive and systematic approach to developing teachers of color. The project relies on cooperative efforts by several institutions of higher education, school districts and the Board of Teaching to remove barriers and create new pathways to licensure for a large number of qualified people of color.

The objectives of the Teachers of Color Project are to: (1) identify and recruit teacher of color candidates, (2) offer program options leading to professional licensure, (3) provide critical financial assistance, and (4) implement a multi-faceted support system to ensure success in the program.

The St. Cloud State University alternate licensure was created by networking with Metropolitan State University and local school districts. The network was necessary because historically many people of color at major universities and colleges have had negative experiences which result in their unwillingness to invest their self-worth in the possibility of additional failures. The program was not created as a rejection of the high quality campus-based, traditional teacher preparation at St. Cloud State. It was also not driven by a lack of teachers or a need by school districts to assume control. Rather it was in response to the critical need for teachers of color in Minnesota, and indeed, throughout the country.

St. Cloud State University is located in central Minnesota, about 65 miles west of the Twin Cities, which makes it less accessible for students of color. Metropolitan State University is located in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area and has a reputation for cultural

sensitivity and equity. That reputation aides the process of recruiting and provides a base of operation in the inner city. Students are able to complete any necesssary general education credits and upper division electives through Metro State, which lacks a teacher preparation program, and then transfer those credits to St. Cloud State for the final phase of their licensure program.

The Minnesota Board of Teaching granted permission for this alternate licensure format, placing the quality control in the hands of faculty in the Department of Teacher Development at St. Cloud State. A Certification Team for the secondary education licensure is composed of faculty from the various disciplines. These individuals serve as instructors and as an advisory panel who recommend licensure. The St. Cloud State Teacher of Color program has attempted to meet the AACTE proposed alternate licensure criteria which include: (1) selective admission standards, (2) appropriate curriculum, (3) a supervised internship, and (4) a final examination to assume competence (AACTE, 1986). Candidates provide initial application portfolios which are evaluated by a faculty team. The curriculum follows that of campus-based programs with some streamlining and more application and field-based work. Internships are supervised by mentor teachers as well as SCSU faculty. All students must successfully pass the Pre Professional Skills test before being granted a license in the state of Minnesota.

School districts participating agree to hire the licensure candidates as instructional aides. In this way, administrators who profess a desire to promote diversity among their staff can demonstrate their commitment through budget adjustments that allow these candidates to be employed fulltime in the school while developing their teaching skills. For those who are qualified, a provisional license can be obtained, allowing substitute teaching simultaneously with work on permanent licensure.

Students in the alternate licensure program are most often fully employed and responsible for families. Therefore, funding has been provided for courses and textbooks. Most funds have been short-term and specific to portions of programs. There is also a

work component built into the school district-sponsored program which provides students with another income supplement, as well as with advantages inherent in working in a school setting.

The initial Teacher of Color Project was designed to provide an alternate path for licensure for degreed individuals needing only to complete their professional education core and subject area coursework. This delivery system accommodates the needs of nontraditional students, offering coursework at locations easily accessible to the students. Participants journey through the program in cohorts which enables them to experience support and camaraderie. However, the project later expanded to include students with varying numbers of college credits and therefore developed additional routes to meet the more diverse needs and student profiles. In addition to the off-campus compressed licensure model, there is an on-campus Teacher of Color program which is not an alternate route, but which provides students with funding as well as employment in the St. Cloud school district following graduation.

Objectives of the Study

An argument against alternate licensure programs is that there is a paucity of research to lend credibility to their worth. In the meantime, rather than continue with status quo methods which have failed to provide adequate access to teacher of color candidates and assurance of their successful program completion, St. Cloud State University has designed and continued to refine its alternate licensure programs. To lend credence to the energy, creativity, and hope behind this Teacher of Color program, we have examined students' lived experiences through case studies, which although they may not be generalizable, are personally valid stamps of approval (vanManen, 1990).

Data collection led to the development of the following research questions:

1) Do previous life experiences impact an individual's decision to pursue a teaching license as well as the successful completion of a licensure program?

2) What are specific programmatic policies and practices necessary for successful procurement of a teaching license?

3) What barriers stand in the way of attaining licensure?

4) What are students' post-graduation reflections which might inform future practices?

Methodology

Three students who are recent Teacher of Color licensure graduates, who participated in either on- or off-campus programs, and who attained different licenses were randomly selected as case studies. The students responded to open-ended interviews several times, providing both facts and opinions on practices and programming (Yin, 1994). The qualitative method of case studies was chosen as a means of providing greater understanding about the impact of the Teacher of Color program as well as insights into what aspects are perceived as failures and which are deemed successful (Merriam, 1988). These three graduates of differing routes to licensure lend their stories, and thus the meaning of their experiences, to the political and philosophical debates about alternative licensure (Knowles, 1992).

In addition to the case studies, surveys were collected from 47 students, all of whom are presently enrolled in the off-campus licensure program. It was important to collect information from off-campus route students because two of the three case studies involved on-campus route students. Although a total of 47 students responded to the surveys, not all survey items were addressed by all students. However, all individuals responded to questions about their previous educational experiences as well as why they wanted to become teachers.

Data Collection and Analysis

As data was collected and reviewed, the areas emphasized led to the research questions. Data from initial interviews was transcribed before students were asked for followup interviews. Survey information selected was based on the research questions

which had arisen from the case studies. The analysis will follow the outline of the research questions.

1) Do previous life experiences impact an individual's decision to pursue a teaching license as well as the successful completion of a licensure program?

Research into alternative versus traditional teacher preparation has focused on curricula and teacher candidates (Adelman, N.E., 1986; Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Feistritzer, E. D., 1990; Stoddart, T., & Floden, R. E., 1989). Alternate licensure requires a student to have substantial life experience. Therefore, a comparison of traditional teacher preparation programming with what is necesssary to meet the needs of these students is inappropriate. The candidates in this program are nontraditional, and most will have had substantial experience working within an education-related field. This particular profile is a common one in alternate licensure programs (Darling-Hammon, Hudson, & Kirby, 1989; Stoddart, 1992). Research has provided evidence of the impact of life experiences on teacher candidates' application of their education to their future teaching (Bullough, 1989; Crow, 1987; Gomez & Stoddart, 1991; Hollingsworth, 1989; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991).

Student Profiles

The three St. Cloud State University Teacher of Color students who are presently teaching or working on advanced degrees provide examples of the power of personal stories:

Student #1: Born in Houston, Texas, J. was one of thirteen children raised by a single mother, and the only sibling to complete high school and college. His first language was Spanish which he learned from his mother who had a sixth grade education. However, it is to his mother that J. gives the credit for his persistence and success because she perceived him as exceptional from the time he was very young. J. credited two high school teachers, one Mexican and the other African-American, with providing him the encouragement he needed to continue his education.

Student #2: M. was the eighth of 14 children born in Minneapolis but raised in rural Minnesota where her family was the only Black family in the area. Her memories of early years in school are painful and void of any mentors or peers who resembled her. To hide her insecurity, she learned to strike out and was often in the principals' offices. After a few years she learned not to speak in class or raise her hand to answer a question. "To survive, I developed a white sense of me. I didn't know what it was like to be Black. How was I supposed to act?" Her desire to become a teacher arose early as she witnessed her mother as a day care provider and realized that she had never had an African-American teacher and that her self-esteem had diminished as a result of neglect in the classroom.

Student #3: Born in Greenville, Mississippi to a mother whose first child was born to her when she was in 8th grade, L. grew up with five siblings in the projects on Chicago's southside. His father was murdered when L. was a baby, and he is the only member of his family to complete an education. His desire to teach was not a childhood dream but rather one which grew out of his more recent observations of young school-age children of color playing in the streets during school hours. Those observations resulted in L.'s inquiries at school district offices about what was being done for those children. His interest translated into a job as an educational assistant, which whet his appetite for teaching and a license.

Recruitment

Through the use of strategies to tap into an existing pool of talented people of color who range from 30 to 55 years of age and possess the potential and the desire to become licensed teachers, Minnesota school districts can literally create their own pool of teachers of color. A large percentage of these people currently work in metropolitan area schools as teacher assistants, youth advocates, and volunteers. They work in standard and alternative educational settings throughout school districts. Many of them already possess BA, MA and Ph.D. degrees, but have not acquired teaching licenses. Others have varying amounts of formal education ranging from 20 to 200 quarter credits, but do not have a degree. All

of these people have in common very substantial personal and work experiences that enhance their capacity to absorb and understand new information.

The identification and recruitment of teacher of color candidates for the St. Cloud State Alternate Licensure Program is accomplished through the presentation of information to leaders in communities of color, nontraditional career workers desiring change, community college students, para-professional and non-licensed school personnel.

Student #1: Although J. was recruited to the SCSU campus without concern for a major, he became interested in teaching because of some members of the university faculty who served as informal mentors to him. By the end of his sophomore year, J. had been invited by faculty to join the Teacher of Color program on campus. He thought he would enjoy teaching young children but after completing a practicum in a kindergarten classroom, J. decided to major in social studies at the secondary level.

Student #2: M. attended SCSU because it was close to her home. She was the last child in her family to graduate from a rural, all-white high school. Her younger siblings chose to move back to the Twin Cities area where they could participate in a more balanced, less stressful educational experience. She had decided to major in sociology, and during her sophomore year took a course in Child and Family Studies. At that time she realized that she wanted to teach young children and so completed coursework for a prekindergarten license. The added incentive of financial assistance and guaranteed employment made the decision more reasonable for M. However, after not being granted fulltime employment as promised, M. returned as a participant in the Teacher of Color Program to acquire her Elementary Teaching license.

Student #3: L. had initially attended a 99% white, fundamentalist Christian college where he earned 86 credits and from which he dropped out two quarters short of graduation. During his period of employment as an assistant in Minneapolis schools, he learned of the Teacher of Color Alternate Licensure program and applied for admission.

He was rejected because of too few credits and too little experience. He argued his case and was accepted on probation.

Survey data

Demographic information from the surveys revealed that of the 47 students, 33 are female and 14, male. Ethnicities represented among the students include 30 African-Americans, 11 Africans, 3 Latinos, 2 Asians, and 1 Native-American. Twenty-five students are married, and 20 of them are parents. Fifteen students are single, and 8 of those are parents. Although not all students revealed their ages, they are all nontraditional students. This information fits with the profile of the case study of Student #3 who is also a nontraditional student whose needs could best be met in the alternate route program.

The extent of prior education of alternate route students varies, with 26 students continuing work on undergraduate degrees, 11 having already completed bachelors' degrees, 7 with masters' degrees, and 3 with doctorates. Despite the fact that all of the students are working toward teaching licensure, 44 of the 47 have had experience and have been employed in the schools in some capacity, as substitute teachers, assistant teachers, program coordinators, parent educators, or preschool teachers. This parallels the experience of Student #3 whose work with children at risk motivated him to seek licensure. In addition to employment in the schools, survey respondents have worked in such capacities as an airplane mechanic, chief environmental mircobiologist, graphic artist, urban planner, flight attendant, beautician, and a military job trainer among other things.

The rationale expressed for wanting to pursue a teaching license varied. However, most students' motivation grew out of their own experiences as students or as parents. Thirty-four students wrote about their concern for young students of color and their desire to provide those children with equal educational experiences, encouragement, and guidance. Twenty-seven of the surveys revealed alternate route students' desires to be role models as teachers of color. Eleven responses dealt with the need to address diversity in the classroom as an important factor in their decision to become teachers.

While the amount of coursework beyond a high school diploma differs greatly among teacher candidates, the life experiences, both negative (i.e., no peers or teachers of color; parents with little education) and positive (i.e., parents' encouragement and expectations for their children) provided motivation for their pursuit of licensure. Since many graduates of color are attracted to more lucrative careers (Darling-Hammond, 1984; Post & Woessner, 1987; Smith & Welch, 1986), and since a number of these students are deciding in mid-life to change careers, it seems logical to attribute those choices to past impressionable experiences.

Program Policies and Practices

2) What are specific programmatic policies and practices necessary for successful procurement of a teaching license?

The Alternate Route model uses the standard teacher licensure program process in a slightly modified and compressed version which responds to the maturity, experience and past academic success of the students. The program is designed to run from summer to summer, about 15 months, while leaving room for people who have not mastered all the competencies to continue in the process until they reach the standard of excellence required for licensure recommendation. All students are required to meet the 192 quarter credit graduation requirements for SCSU. Each student will register for the standard class, but it will be delivered in a compressed mode. Classes often meet for two nights per week and one Saturday each month.

Regardless of specific schedules, coursework has the equivalent of 52 sessions of 4 hours each of content totaling 208 contact hours during the year. In addition, 40 hours of class time at the end of the school year in the form of a debriefing and final professional seminar. This brings the total contact hours to 288 which is roughly 54 percent of the 550 hours in the regular program. The inclusion of a full time internship for the entire school year with a mentor teacher and the enhanced format of the practice teaching experience is perceived to adequately compensate for the compression of faculty contact.

Student #1 (On-campus program): "At first I wanted to major in physical therapy, then engineering. Then I was inspired by teachers I watched who were good with kids and thought that some day I might like to teach Mexican-American kids in the inner city. I wanted to be a role model. At the end of my sophomore year, Les Green invited me to join the Teacher of Color program. At first I wanted to be an elementary teacher but after my experience in a kindergarten classroom, I changed my mind and went into secondary Social Studies. The most I got from the program was support; staff was always good to me and gave me all the tools I need. I graduated in the spring of 1997 and am presently teaching Social Studies at a local high school."

Student #2 (On-campus program): M. graduated in 1995 with a BA in Sociology and a license in Early Education as part of the Teacher of Color program. She felt supported and aided in her success by three faculty involved in the program. During her student teaching experience which occurred in rural Minnesota, she was occasionally met with wonder or fear by children who asked questions such as, 'Why is your skin dirty?' Because M. participated in the on-campus program, she was not part of a cohort and received support only from her family. Having entered the university without a sense of self as African-American, she chose not to join organizations composed of or for students of color. Working 40 hours a week throughout her college years also made it difficult for her to socialize within the university community. It was not until she was midway through her higher education that she began a process of "self-discovery" during which time she began to reflect on where she had been and who she really was and wanted to be. "Because of the agreement with the local district, I was given a position right away in a summer program. The administrators were impressed and wanted to hire me fulltime which ended up involving 7 different jobs. The next year I was cut to one third time which I could not afford and so am back in school. Although the District administration professed a desire for diverse staff, issues of seniority were used as rationalizations for my situation." When the school district was unwilling to provide her with fulltime employment in the field of

Early Education, she returned to SCSU where she will complete her Elementary license in 1999.

Student #3: L. undertook coursework at two community colleges and Metropolitan State before completing his license in Secondary Education through St. Cloud State. It took him a year and a half to complete the license. "It overwhelms me when I think back that I was almost not given the opportunity and now here I am. I harvested everything that they put in me and this product came out. From the first cohort, I was one of the first to graduate and I had the most to do. When I graduated, I didn't take a teaching job right away, but talked to a professor in Special Education about my interest in students with behavior problems. During my student teaching experiences in SPED everywhere I went I was offered a position on the spot, but I wanted to finish my degree first. In February of 1998 I will graduate with a MS in Special Education."

Survey Data

The majority of the survey responses to students' involvement in the alternate licensure program spoke to issues of financial support and the program structure which allowed them to move through the program more rapidly. When asked why they thought they might be successful in attaining their teaching licenses, 25 students attributed their optimism to their past experiences and diverse backgrounds. Many students referred to their affective traits such as compassion, patience, strength, determination, hope, faith, and flexibility.

While two of the three case studies provide evidence of the possibility of students of color attaining a teaching license through a traditional on-campus route, it appears obvious from the personal stories of pain, that the lack of support from peers of color was detrimental to students on campus. Most of the faculty in both programs were Euro-American, which seemed at this point not to be an issue for the students. The students in the alternate route were nontraditional (i.e., older, married with children, employed fulltime) and therefore in need of evening classes and a compressed program.

Barriers

3) What barriers stand in the way of attaining licensure?

Student #1: Being one of few Mexican-American students on campus, J. found that after his first two weeks there, he was ready to return home. "I wanted to quit almost every month mostly because of the ignorance around me. I would think to myself, 'Why am I not home with my family?' Then I would remind myself that if I made it through, there would be a better chance for others like myself."

Student #2: "I experienced many barriers throughout the application process and feel it was because I am a minority. Finances always have been somewhat of a barrier for me." Having to work 40 hours a week made it difficult to maintain the grade point average M. would have preferred. The lack of self-identity combined with hours off campus left her without companionship. "I didn't know where to go for support."

Student #3: "I was always persistent. When the red tape came, I just cut through it and went ahead and did what needed doing. I remember Les saying, 'If this is your dream, don't let anything come between you and it.' Today that's what I preach to the kids. Members of my cohort still call me today for advice and support."

Survey data

Interestingly few students perceived many barriers. The compressed nature of the program, which is viewed positively, is also expressed as a barrier in terms of its demand for sustained effort for a year or two. An additional concern is any interruption of the program due to insufficient funding. Another barrier is the commitment to hiring of teachers of color by administrators who may be giving it lip service alone.

Reflections on decision to become a teacher:

4) What are students' post-graduation reflections which might inform future practices?

Student #1: "I love my job and think I am making a difference in the school. I knew that the only person who was going to stop me from achieving this goal was myself. The money and program were out there; I just had to grab it. Now I need to get my siblings

back in school and away from the attractions of the world. I think the program should continue just as it exists, although the campus needs more to support the participants. I was lonely at times, but Les was always there for me."

Student #2: "I didn't have one teacher of color throughout my educational career. I couldn't give answers to questions and had no self-esteem. There were just no role models. I want to be able to make a difference. When I student taught, I watched children of color smile and brighten up when they saw me. I feel that being one of few Teachers of Color in the area, there is a huge responsibility on my shoulders. People look at me and expect a lot of me." M. often reflected on the loss she felt about being the sole person of color in her surroundings and the need for a mentor on campus and in area schools in which she performed her internships. She found out after having been hired upon graduation that a teacher had been cut so that she could be provided a position. That situation created a negative work environment for her. "The school district needs to hold to its agreement for providing employment."

Student #3: "I think the feeling of accomplishment I have is almost as good as seeing your kid born! There were sacrifices and there was less money while enroute, but it was an investment in my future. There were times I was tempted to give up, but I created a path and pursued it. There needs to be consistent communication between the university and the students. A newsletter would be helpful. In fact, because the Teacher of Color program gave me this opportunity, I would like to give back and would assist with the newsletter. I think graduates should be used as mentors to students still working on their licenses."

Discussion

The utilization of case studies provides a personal view of the journey through alternate licensure programs by three individuals whose experiences have parallels by virtue of their life journeys. It is beyond debate in this country that issues of race continue to impact lives and opportunities. The desire to teach among the participants in the Teacher of Color Program is obvious. Students' personal educational and life experiences, both

positive and/or negative, appear to be the determining factor in their seeking teaching licenses. Self-reports of affective traits such as compassion, determination and hope may signal areas that could lead to further research concerning the numerous experiences of the teacher candidates in various positions in the school system.

The two case studies of traditional on-campus route candidates demonstrate the fact that teachers of color can successfully complete such a program. The compressed coursework, the internships, the convenience of class sites, the collaboration among insitutions of higher education were all necessary factors in the success of the programs as demonstrated by case studies and surveys. In addition, financial support was essential. Neither program is presently supported with firm commitments either from outside of or within the university, but support has been provided annually from a number of different sources.

Although there was little mention of barriers, it is obvious that without longterm financial backing, such a program as it presently exists, is more difficult to maintain. It also is difficult to convince students of color, whose experience is otherwise, that support will be forthcoming from one semester to the next.

Conclusions and Implications for future practice

As long as the high calibre student, as demonstrated in this description, is attracted to the Teacher of Color Alternate Licensure program, it would seem that the label, "alternate" would be inappropriate. The knowledge base in the College of Education at St. Cloud State University proposes that all graduates are "Transformative Professionals" who are capable of expanding their own and others' perspectives. If one listens closely to the personal stories of these teacher candidates and graduates, one perceives that they are transformative individuals in every sense of the word.

Our research suggests three implications for enhancing preservice teacher education programs for persons of color:

1. Support: When the issue of support is raised, it becomes evident from the experiences related in this study that support is essential in two forms: social/emotional and financial. Both on-campus students spoke of their lack of peer support, as well as their appreciation of the financial assistance. Both students were fortunate enough to have strong family support, to possess internalized values about the importance of education and, to maintain a strong commitment to teaching. The alternate route student appreciated the support of the cohort so much so that he was willing to continue those relationships following his graduation.

There are many avenues of financial assistance available for all college students today. However, the needs of nontraditional students of color are in many ways unique. Not only are they often supporting families and working fulltime, but they are unable to easily access information about and traditional programming for teacher preparation. The customary red tape for these students, many of whom have had previously negative experiences negotiating the "system", needs to be cut through by appropriate meeting times, central locations, and helpful personnel to assist in decision-making, transfer articulation, and registration.

Financial support of alternate programming is essential and should be firmly established at the outset so that students do not experience "down time" in the course of their programming because of a temporary shortage of finances by program sponsors. Predetermined and solid funding of alternate licensure also provides students with the perspective of a firm commitment to this effort by the sponsoring institutions.

2. Development of role models: Student #1 talked of being "inspired by teachers". Student #2 said that she had "never had an African-American teacher and her self esteem had diminished." Student #3 talked of teaching as "not a childhood dream", but one that grew from his job as an educational assistant.

From these observations it is apparent that teachers of color have the potential to succeed, but teacher preparation programs must provide alternate routes to gain more role

models so that pre-service student teachers of color may confront their own lack of self-esteem in the classroom. Through these experiences, students of color will be able to test their assumptions about the teaching profession. At the same time, it is not unfair to maintain high expectations of the students despite their past experiences or lack of role models. Completing a compressed plan of study in 15 months is a difficult undertaking. Students should be forewarned of the demands of the program, while simultaneously being affirmed of their ability to complete it, and the exciting prospects of their impact in classrooms.

3. Planning strategies for recruitment: Although St. Cloud State University maintains an active recruitment of students of color through sponsoring summer camps, on-campus days, and presentations to communities of color, none of the three case studies was recruited through those traditional channels. The on-campus students did not even begin their college educations with a teaching license in mind. Student #3 was driven by his experiences to seek out a licensure program. However, the active recruitment measures did attract the largest number of participants. As the program gains legitimacy with the passage of time, recruitment will occur more by word of mouth in communities of color.

The enthusiasm of all three case study teachers, and others like them should be utilized in the recruitment process and additionally throughout the entire course of study in the role of mentors or cohort leaders. There is no better witness to the suitability of a program such as this than a successful graduate. Retention rates could be raised by continuous mentoring when schedules and lives become barriers to students' completion of the program.

As long as there continue to exist in this country, unequal opportunities of access and education, such programs as described in this study are not only appropriate, but essential. At some point in the future perhaps preservice teachers of color will flock to the doors of teacher preparation institutions because they have positive role models and

educational experiences, rather than negative. Perhaps some day education professionals will be so highly valued that people of color will choose to teach over a more "lucrative" profession. In the meantime, the commitment to licensing teachers of color should remain at the forefront of every teacher preparation program. Along with a philosophical declaration however, should follow a promise of financial support as a demonstration of the priority of the commitment to provide this country's students with teachers of color.

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